

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Conserving natural resources in Ferry County since 1947.

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FERRY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Small Farm Workshop & Electric Fencing Demonstration

Ferry CD will hold a Small Farm Workshop on June 16th from 10am - 3pm at the Malo Grange. The workshop will focus on manure and pasture management. Farm operators will learn best management practices that will help protect water quality and maintain a farm's productivity.

The workshop will include a two hour morning session that will cover important information related to the proper management of livestock waste. This will be followed by a question and answer session and a complimentary lunch. For the afternoon session, attendees will travel to a project site and view an electric fencing demonstration given by Rick Newman of Gallagher Fence.

The influence of livestock on water quality is becoming an important issue. New state and federal laws require that livestock operators take steps to reduce their risk factors for water quality pollution. The main concern is to



Before BMP's



After BMP's

keep manure out of water pathways so its constituents aren't carried to surface and ground water.

The District offers a self-assessment tool that will assist landowners in determining the major risk factors for their livestock operation. The self-assessment can be completed privately, and the District can assist in developing management practices that address any concerns identified.

Please come and join us for a day of learning and sharing. To register or for more details, contact us at (509)775-3473.

Project funded by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

Join us for our monthly meetings held the fourth Monday of each month at 5pm.

All meetings are open to the public and are held at the District office located at 84 East Delaware (above the Coulee Dam Credit Union).

Keeping Water Clean For All

Ferry County is dry country, and life concentrates near the water sources. Plants, wildlife, livestock, and people all compete for the same resources. Without some management all the use will result in degraded resources. Muddy water and over-grazed riparian areas can sometimes indicate damage from overuse of a stream.



One of the most cost effective means of protecting streambanks is to fence them. Fences hold livestock back from the fragile land at the water's edge and help keep manure out of the water. The plants along the creek can grow strong, and thicker vegetation helps to filter pollutants out of runoff water.



If we fence our stock away from the creek, we still have to provide them with water. There are many ways to use the water and still protect it from pollutants. One way to do this is to pipe water from the creek to an off-channel trough. This keeps stock out of the creek all together. Another option is to build a "water gap". This is a point where the fence is extended to the water, which allows the animals controlled access. The landowner can further protect the stream bank with rock or gravel.



Water is precious, and every day the demand for it grows. If each of us puts out a little bit of effort, we can make sure there is enough clean healthy water for everyone and everything. If you would like more information on riparian fencing or alternative water sources for livestock, please contact us. We are here to help.

Top Left: This bank has recently been fenced to limit livestock access. Though it still shows some scars, it is starting to heal.

Middle: This water tank provides for livestock that are fenced away from the stream.

Lower Left: A fenced water gap allows stock access to the stream while still protecting most of the riparian area.

Ferry Conservation District programs and services are available to all without discrimination.

2007 Spring Conservation Fair

The Ferry County Fairgrounds hosted the 2007 Spring Conservation Fair, which was a hit with fairgoers. Approximately twice as many people showed up this year to enjoy all the day's activities, which included the plant sale, fish stamping, birdhouse building, a 4-H petting zoo, and workshops on weeds, composting, forest health, and gardening in Ferry County. There were also several informational booths, as well as blue grass music provided by local citizens.

The annual fishing derby, which has been held in conjunction with the Spring Conservation Fair in the past, has instead been scheduled to take place at Curlew Lake State Park on June 16th. This event is conducted by the Colville National Forest and Lake Roosevelt Walleye Club. For more information, please contact Karen Honeycutt at (509)738-7738.

Ferry CD wishes to thank all the participants and fairgoers who helped make this year's event such a wonderful success, and we look forward to another successful fair in 2008!



"To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival." Wendell Berry

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Join us for a **FREE** Workshop
On Small Farm Management
June 16, 2007
At the Malo Grange

Details inside!



Rail Banking - A Crash Course



Ferry County residents are currently discussing rail banking issues concerning the 28 mile corridor running from Republic to Danville. Here we will present a crash course in rail banking, what it is, how it came about, and what it means for our county.

In 1968, Congress enacted the National Trails System Act in order to establish a nationwide system of nature trails. Originally, the act made no provision for converting unused rights-of-way to trail; however, in 1976 the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act authorized the offering of abandoned rights-of-way for acquisition for public purposes, including recreational uses. This act did not address the issue of abandoned rights-of-way that revert back to landowners with underlying rights to it. Since this reversion would have potentially made the property unavailable for trail use, Congress passed the Trail Act Amendments of 1983. These amendments state that if a rail right-of-way proposed for abandonment is instead used as a trail and the right-of-way is preserved for future rail service, then the right-of-way would not be considered abandoned.

This legislation created the foundation for rail banking. Simply



stated, rail banking is a means by which rail carriers can preserve unused rights-of-way for future use. Through rail banking, a rail carrier can ensure the future restoration of rail service, while also making the property available for use as a trail.

Rail banking is essentially a voluntary agreement between a rail carrier proposing to abandon a right-of-way and a party interested in converting it to a trail, also known as a trail sponsor. If given trail use authority, the trail sponsor would assume full managerial, financial, and legal responsibility for the right-of-way. As part of the rail banking agreement, the trail sponsor must agree that the right-of-way is subject to restoration of rail service. Potential trail sponsors must submit a formal request to the Surface Transportation Board, who administers the rail banking program. If approved, the rail carrier and trail sponsor begin negotiating the rail banking agreement. Once an agreement is reached, it may be implemented without further action by the Board.

In 2006, the Ferry County Commissioners made a formal request to the Surface Transportation Board to rail bank the 28 mile corridor running from Republic to Danville. The request was approved and negotiations have begun with Kettle Falls International Railway.

Proponents of rail banking cite both its recreational and economic value to the community. In addition to the myriad of recreational opportunities, which all offer potential tourism dollars, this alternative to abandonment preserves the rail infrastructure that may be needed in the future and allows for the installation of various utilities along the right-of-way. It is also felt that rail banking agreements are simpler to coordinate than negotiating the purchase of corridor property from individual landowners once it has been abandoned.

On the other side, adjacent landowners may wish to purchase the land and may be concerned about a public trail system passing through their land. Issues related to vandalism, noise, safety, and privacy all contribute to landowner reluctance.

For more information, visit:
<http://americantrails.org/resources/railtrails>
or www.ferrycountyrailtrail.com